

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

This Amendment cancels Claims 8 and 14; and amends Claim 5. Support for the amendments is found in the specification and claims as originally filed. In particular, support for Claim 5 is found in canceled Claim 14. No new matter would be introduced by entry of these amendments.

Upon entry of these amendments, Claims 5-7, 10 and 12 will be pending in this application. Claims 5 and 7 are independent.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing and reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, in light of the remarks that follow.

Claims 5-6 and 8, 10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,001,761 ("Hata-761"). In addition, Claims 5-6 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 5,955,392 ("Takeuchi"). Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Takeuchi.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that Claim 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Final Rejection at page 5, section 8. In addition, Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that Claim 7 is allowed. Final Rejection at page 5, section 9.

Independent Claim 8 is canceled, and allowable Claim 14 is canceled and incorporated into independent Claim 5. Thus, the pending claims are patentable over the cited prior art.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is necessary in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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